

## **History of the Auckland International Cultural Festival**

The festival started in 1992, when Refugee Services (then Refugee and Migrant Service) was a much smaller organisation made up almost entirely of volunteers. It began as a fundraising activity and a celebration of food for Refugee Day in late June, and was held at a closed venue at the wharf and later at the Greenlane Showgrounds. The ethnic food was supplied by the refugee communities, and the funds raised went towards Refugee Services' resettlement work.

The festival grew in size and in 1997 Penny Hartel from Refugee Services developed a relationship with the events team at Auckland City Council, and paved the way for the festival to become an Auckland City summer event in Potter's Park.

From that point Refugee Services focus became more on raising awareness and profile of refugees, and the refugee communities raised funds for themselves.

The festival outgrew Potter's Park and is now based at the Wesley War Memorial Park in May Road (near Mt Roskill).

Refugee Services continues to be involved in the festival, due to the strong relationship that it has with refugee communities, and in the Welcoming Ceremony where representatives from both Refugee Services and the refugee communities speak alongside government dignitaries.

<http://www.aucklandcity.govt.nz/whatson/events/cultural/>

For further information,  
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